

ROOMS OF PORCELAIN

by Meredith Chilton

ONE of the most interesting developments in Western ceramic history was the fashion for rooms of porcelain. Between 1663–1765, special porcelain rooms were created all over Europe, predominately in Germany. Initially, Oriental porcelain was used, but once porcelain was made in Europe, some rooms were furnished with European porcelain as well.

Two existing traditions appear to have influenced the development of porcelain rooms. First, there was the custom of displaying precious and curious objects in princely treasure chambers or cabinets of curiosity. Such an early collector was the Archduke Ferdinand II of the Tyrol (1529–95) who assembled over 20,000 objects of curiosity and treasure. An inventory of his collection, divided into many classifications, was made on his death. It included 233 pieces of porcelain which were displayed in cabinets at Schloss Ambras¹.

Another European tradition for the display of precious object was the buffet. Here, precious metals were set out in tiered displays in order to impress guests. This tradition appears to date at least to medieval times, and continued to flourish in the 17th and 18th centuries, with displays of ever increasing magnitude (fig 1).

In the 17th century, Oriental porcelain became so abundant that it was taken out of the treasure chamber and the cabinet and placed on furniture, mantle-pieces, tiered on chimney-pieces, and ultimately it was displayed on the walls of rooms themselves. It is well known that the Dutch dominated trade with China and Japan in the 17th century. Trade registers reveal that between 1604–57 approximately 3.2 million pieces of porcelain were shipped to Holland². It is not surprising therefore that the massed display of porcelain is considered Dutch in origin.

The earliest documented porcelain rooms were associated

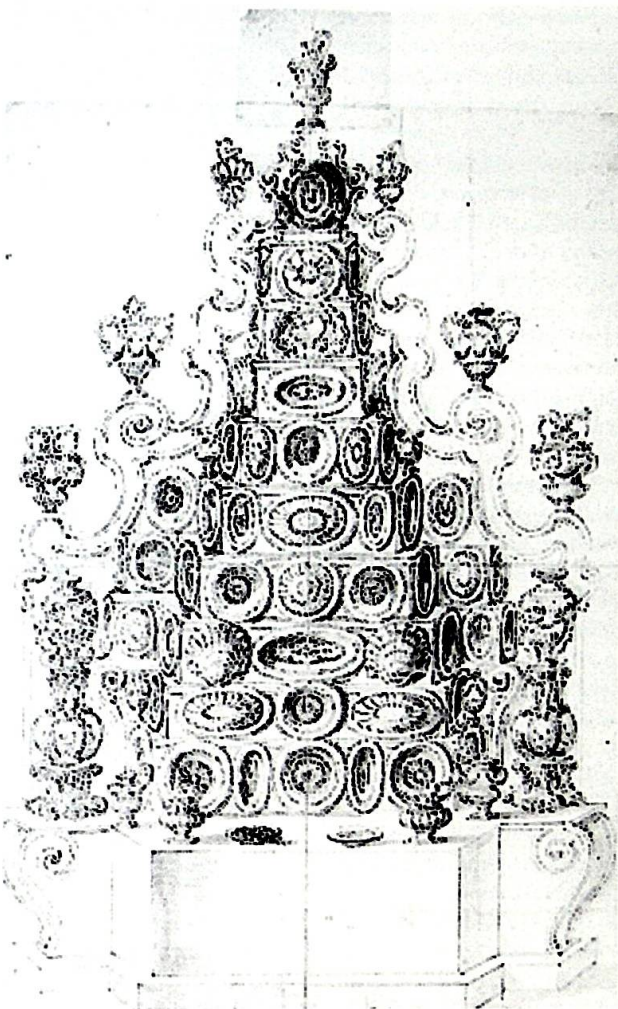


Figure 1. Design for a silver buffet by Domenico Bolognese, Bologna, late 17th century. Friends of the Museum Fund, 1938-88-2596A. Courtesy of Cooper-Hewitt, National Museum of Design, Smithsonian Institution/Art Resource, N.Y.

with royal Dutch ladies. Amalia van Solms (1602–75), the wife of Frederik Hendrik, Prince of Orange, had an extensive and highly prized collection of porcelain. It is not known how she displayed her porcelain, but two of her daughters created porcelain rooms. Her elder daughter, Louise Henriette (1627–67), wife of Frederick William of Brandenburg-Prussia, created the first documented porcelain room in 1662–63 at Oranienburg, about 30 km north of Berlin. Although no visual records exist, Louise Henriette's correspondence with the building supervisor, Otto von Schwerin, survived. It is evident she was building a porcelain cabinet between January and April 1663 as she wrote,

'Je m'étonne qu'il faudra encore de la porcelaine, mais cela n'empêche pas, qu'on n'achève tout, on peut les mettre après aussi bien',

and again in April,

'Je vous prie d'avoir soin qu'un bon doreur dore mon cabinet de porcelaine, car l'autre ne vaut rien.'

The porcelain room at Oranienburg was designed by the Dutch-trained architect,

Memhart. This room was to establish a tradition in the Prussian royal family which flourished for four generations.

Louise Henriette's sister, Albertina Agnes (1634–96), who married William Frederick of Nassau-Dietz, created a porcelain room at Schloss Oranienstein near Koblenz by 1683. Here, porcelain was recorded as being set on 'tablets' or hanging shelves, some of which were gilded³.

Parallel developments in Germany, England and Holland existed in the late 1680s, when the fashion for creating porcelain rooms spread, and became increasingly elegant. This was in part due to the influence of French style. Although Louis XIV never created a porcelain room, and indeed appears only to have flirted with, rather than to have been seduced by the Orient, a number of important devel-

opments at Versailles appear to have influenced porcelain rooms.

The first is the concept which is called in German 'Gesamtkunstwerke' — a deeply symbolic decorative principle, in which the individual element or work of art loses itself in the decorative ensemble. All parts are subject to central organisation and become a total work of art. This concept, developed by Le Brun (1619–90) at Vaux le Vicomte, mirrored the political ideal of the absolute monarch and was adopted with enthusiasm, particularly in Germany. It led to the development of thematic and integrated interior decoration.

The second was the evolution of 'le goût chinois' as royal taste. Although the French court was, of course, not the first to have been exposed to the extraordinary trade goods acquired in the Orient by the new East India companies, it reacted in an interesting manner. In 1665, just one year after the founding of the French East India company by Colbert, Jan Nieuhoff's celebrated account of *'An Embassy from the East India Company of the United Provinces to the Grand Tatar Chan, Emperor of China'* was published in French. This book had a great impact upon all who read it and there are French accounts of reproductions being made of some of the illustrations, particularly of the famous 'Porcelain Tower'. It was described in the *Mercure Gallant* in July, 1678, as 'the 8th wonder of the world, of real porcelain of an inestimable price... All the porcelain of the tower is green, red and yellow, there is very little blue. When the sun shines upon the porcelain, it gleams by itself so much that you may barely behold it.'

In 1670 Louis XIV decided to build a small pleasure palace in the grounds of Versailles for the delectation and delight of Mme de Montespan. It was to be called the Trianon de Porcelain, though no porcelain was actually used in its construction. This was the first of many wonderful and fanciful European pavilions built in Chinese style. The architect, Le Vau (1612–70), began work in 1670 and was perhaps partly inspired by Nieuhoff's illustration of the Imperial Palace in Peking. The Trianon was decorated following the concept of 'Gesamtkunstwerke', in Chinese style. All the exterior facades were ornamented with plaques of faience, vases and 'different birds represented naturally', while the inside was decorated in blue and white, especially in the Chambre de Diane whose decorative scheme was described as 'en façon de porcelaine' (fig 2). Even the great bed, designed by Nicodemus Tessin the Younger (1654–1728), was hung with blue and white draperies. Félibien, writing in 1674 describes the Trianon as, 'A little palace of an extraordinary construction... the château is all of porcelain, surrounded by a parterre full of jasmin with innumerable little fountains.'

This delicious building did not survive the damp and cold French winters and was pulled down in 1687. However, the year before, in 1686, another circumstance occurred which reinforced French enthusiasm for the Orient — the famous visit of the twelve Siamese Ambassadors, which Mme Belevitch-Stankevitch describes in detail⁵. This embassy was at the highest diplomatic level, from one monarch to another, and the exchange of gifts was therefore very different from the activities of an East India company. The gifts included silks, lacquer and large numbers of Oriental porcelain which

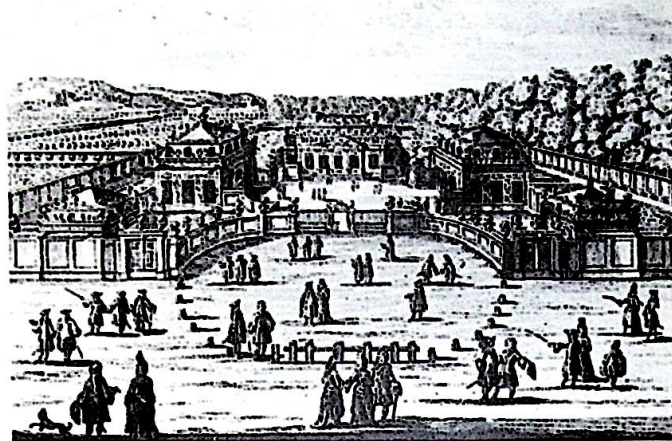


Figure 2. Trianon de Porcelaine, engraving by Petrus Schenk, c.1680. F.H. Hofmann, *Das Porzellan*, Berlin, 1932, p.471.

were given to the King (who received 1500–50 pieces), the Dauphin, the Dauphine and other prominent members of the court.

It is interesting to note that the King gave some 'Siamese' porcelain to Mme de Maintenon who is recorded as displaying 182 small porcelains on her chimney pieces at Saint-Cyr. The magical combination of the enchantment with the Orient and the taste for exoticism was to result in a wave of enthusiasm for chinoiserie — and consequently increased demand for the luxury products of the Orient: silks, lacquer and porcelain.

The next important element contributing to the development of porcelain rooms was the introduction of panelling with mirrors. Until the 1660s all plate glass had come from Venice, but in 1670 a royal manufactory of mirrors was established in Paris by Colbert and was later moved to Saint-Gobain in Picardy. It was here that casting large expanses of glass was perfected in 1691 and the French succeeded the Italians as the masters of plate mirrors. Large expanses of mirror had also been achieved by placing squares of glass side-by-side, enabling people, as Celia Fiennes describes, to see themselves for the first time 'from top to toe'.

This wonderful new decorative technique was widely employed at Versailles. It also helped to evolve a revolutionary manner of displaying precious objects. In 1684 Louis XIV planned a petite galerie at Versailles, adjacent to his bed chamber, which was to be faced with mirrors and adorned with small brackets for the display of his famous collection of gemstone vessels. Peter Thornton mentions that the panels were 'rigged up' at the Gobelins but never installed⁷. It was the first documented example of precious objects being displayed on brackets with mirrors, in a decorative manner.

Almost every European court of the 17th and 18th century looked to France as a leader of style and fashion. Thus, although no porcelain rooms were created at Versailles or indeed in France, elements of French style — the concept of thematic, integrated interior decoration, the taste for the exotic and the use of mirrors — were to contribute to the essentially Dutch concept of porcelain rooms.

The Dutch love of massed porcelain was to be married with French style by a young French Huguenot, Daniel

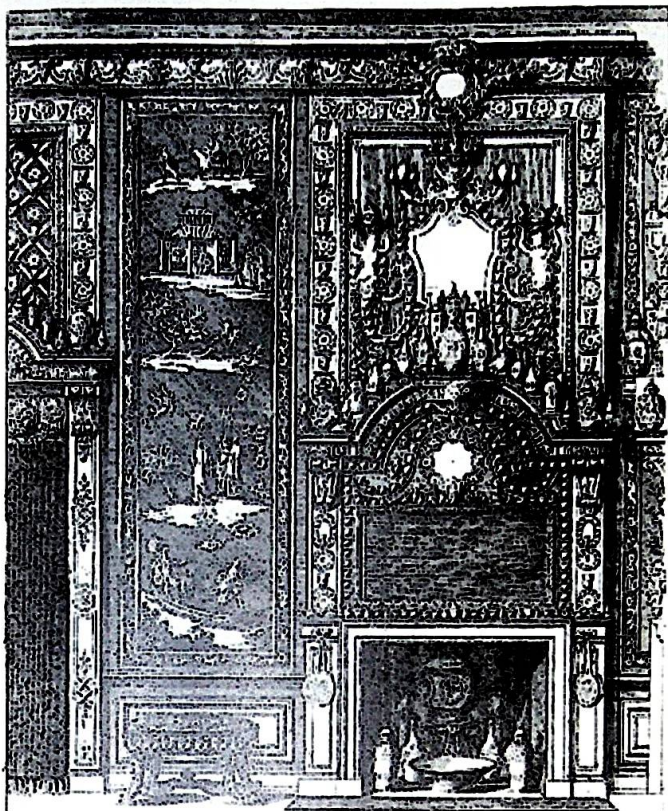


Figure 3. 'New Mantelpieces in Dutch Style', in *Werken van D. Marot*, Suite 11, pl. 2, engraving by Daniel Marot, c.1702. Cooper-Hewitt Museum, New York, 1921.6.352(61).

Marot (1661–1752), the son of Jean Marot, one of the principal designers in Paris in the third quarter of the 17th century. Daniel Marot fled to the Netherlands in 1684 and was employed by William of Orange (1650–1702).

It is likely Marot designed the audience chamber at Honselaarsdijk for William in 1686, which was described by Nicodemus Tessin, 'The chamber was richly decorated with Chinese work and pictures. The ceiling was covered by mirrors so that the perspective was extended endlessly. The chimney-piece was full of precious porcelain, part standing half inside it, and so fitted together that one piece supported another'.

Queen Mary II of England (1662–94), the wife of William of Orange, was to encourage the spread of this French–Dutch style in England and used it to display her vast collections of porcelain at Hampton Court and Kensington Palace. Marot, who was almost certainly involved with the interior decoration at both palaces, later published several extremely influential series of engravings showing massed porcelain displays on chimney-pieces and rooms showing the sumptuous combination of lacquer, mirrors and porcelain (fig.3).

Meanwhile in Prussia, Frederick I (1657–1713) inherited his mother Louise Henriette's collection of Oriental porcelain and rebuilt the palace of Oranienburg. He created a new porcelain room 30 feet by 40 feet at Oranienburg between 1688–95 after designs by Christof Pitzler, a pupil of Jean Marot. An engraving of this room by von Merz was published in Augsburg in 1733 (fig.4). Seven gilt-wood pyra-

mids, laden with porcelain, were placed in front of mirrors to amplify the overwhelming impression of massed porcelain. The porcelain placed on the walls and pillars was designed to enhance the architectural features of the room.

This room was to be gradually raided of its porcelain in order to enrich other porcelain rooms created by Prussian princesses. Some of the porcelain and the gilt stands were removed to the Palace of Lützenburg, where a new porcelain room was designed by Johann Friedrich Eosander von Göthe (1669–1729) for Frederick's first wife, Sophie Charlotte (1668–1705) in about 1703 (fig.5). After Sophie Charlotte's death, the palace was renamed Charlottenburg in her honour. It is evident from Frederick's correspondence that he only finished the work started by his wife on the porcelain room in 1706, probably in time for the marriage of the Crown Prince, Frederick William⁹. It is both at Oranienburg and at Charlottenburg that we may draw together many of the elements already discussed: massed porcelain in the Dutch style, the use of mirrors, the love of porcelain and the exotic, the concept of a room designed as a unit in which the individual parts are lost in the ensemble, and the desire to impress one's visitors with an abundant display of wealth and taste.

Three generations of Prussian royal ladies created porcelain rooms. First Louise Henriette, then Sophie Charlotte and finally Sophie Dorothea (1687–1757), wife of Frederick William of Prussia (1688–1740). Sophie Dorothea was a passionate collector of porcelain, who had agents buying for her in Holland. By 1757 she had 6,700 pieces of porcelain according to inventories of her collection¹⁰. The first porcelain room she created was at her castle of Montbijou, which was drawn by H. Schlicting in 1725. Here, porcelain was to be displayed in a gallery on small brackets fixed to mirrored panelling. The palace was later expanded by von Knobelsdorf and the open walkways at either end of the porcelain gallery were enclosed and transformed into further porcelain galleries which included two 'Bajoden' figures between each window, in the manner of Charlottenburg. The three galleries were to be transformed into the rococo style with green and gold boiseries by J.M. Hoppenhaupt (1709–69) in 1753–54. This palace was destroyed during World War II.

Aristocratic women played a predominant role in the 17th century porcelain collections and in the creation of porcelain rooms. As porcelain collections were part of their personal estates, most were dispersed upon their deaths. It was only when a collection passed to an elder son and became part of a state collection that it had a greater chance of survival. Such was the case with the Prussian royal house. Many 17th century collections formed by aristocratic women are therefore known only through inventories, for example, Mary II of England (d. 1694); Henrietta of Anhalt-Dessau (d. 1695); Queen Dowager Hedvig Eleonora of Sweden at Ulriksdal (d. 1689); and Maria Amalia of Hessen-Kassel¹¹.

Maria Amalia (1653–1711), the wife of Duke Carl of Hessen Kassel, amassed a collection of 2,600 pieces of porcelain before her death. It was used, and displayed in the city castle and at her summer residence at Wabern, built after 1701. Wabern contained a 'Japanese Room' where the Duchess' extensive collection of lacquer, soapstone figures and porcelain was displayed. Wabern was also equipped with a 'Dutch kitchen' as early as 1685, filled with porcelain and

faience for every-day use. A similar kitchen survived at Charlottenburg until the war, and another, adjacent to the porcelain gallery, was at Montbijou, and housed a collection of 730 pieces of Meissen, Vienna, Bayreuth and Saint-Cloud porcelain, according to an inventory of 1738¹².

In the 18th century the fashion for porcelain rooms was to be sustained and perfected by the next generation of collectors. Collecting porcelain and assembling porcelain rooms continued to be a favoured pursuit of noblewomen, but by the early 18th century their husbands and sons became involved as well. Indeed, it seems as if a flurry of porcelain rooms were created in the next 50 years.

Max Emmanuel, Elector of Bavaria (1662–1726), who had resided in Brussels as Stadholder since 1686, and certainly knew the palaces of Honselaarsdijk and Het Loo, created a 'Dutch cabinet' after designs by his master builder Enrico Zuccalli in the Residenz at Munich in about 1693. According to contemporary accounts, this room was furnished with mirrors and lacquer panels with a mantelpiece of 'finest grey marble' ornamented with porcelains arrayed on brackets¹³. This room was later replaced by another in the Residenz which still survives, designed by François Cuvillies (1695–1768), between 1731–33, with gilded carvings by Joachim Dietrich.

The interesting combinations of lacquer, mirrors and 'porcelain used to create these exotic rooms was certainly fostered by the desire of one prince to outshine another. It was disseminated by the engraved designs by Daniel Marot and others, such as Salomon Kleiner (1703–61) and Paul Decker (1677–1713), whose engraving of a cabinet in his book, *Fürstlicher Baumeister*, Augsburg 1711–16, included a careful annotation of each type of material to be used (fig6).

Certainly, the mood of exoticism was spreading. Inspired by Max Emmanuel of Bavaria, the Margravine Sibylla Augusta of Baden-Baden (1675–1733) decided to create a small country mansion near Rastatt in the foothills of the Black Forest between 1710–20. She called it Favorite. It was one of the most enchanting fairy-tale castles, filled with chinoiserie, papier mache figures, silks, Chinese woodcuts and mirror cabinets. It is very much in this vein that cabinets of porcelain must be seen as delicious, playful extravagances, created to delight the senses and amaze the visitor.

The porcelain room which most closely mirrored this ideal was the one created at Schloss Weissenstein in Pommersfelden for the most powerful ecclesiastical prince of Southern Germany, Lothar Franz von Schönborn (1655–1729). As Imperial Chancellor, elector and archbishop of Mainz and Prince-Bishop of Bamberg, he maintained close ties with Vienna. Prince Lothar Franz was a fastidious collector of Oriental porcelain, supplied through his agents in the Netherlands, the Spanish Netherlands and from gifts received at the Imperial Court in Vienna. In about 1719 he commissioned Ferdinand Plitzner (1678–1724) to create a special porcelain and mirror cabinet at Pommersfelden for his collection of Chinese and Japanese porcelain, choosing a decorative scheme based on the interplay of wood marquetry, gilded carvings, mirrors and porcelain (fig7).

It is interesting to note the Prince-Bishop had created a gilded porcelain room in his summer residence at Gaibach between 1711 and 18, where, as he described in a letter to his nephew, the 'good' porcelain, including a large quantity

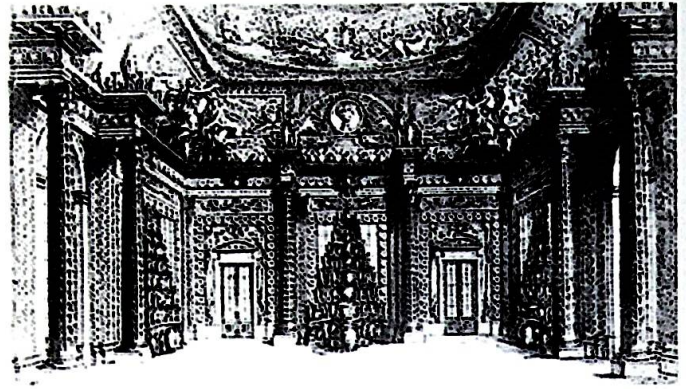


Figure 4. 'Porcelain room at the Royal Palace of Oranienburg', in *Vues de Palais et Maisons de Plaisance de Sa Majesté le Roy de Prusse*, by I.B. Broebes, engraving by J.G. von Merz, Augsburg, 1733.

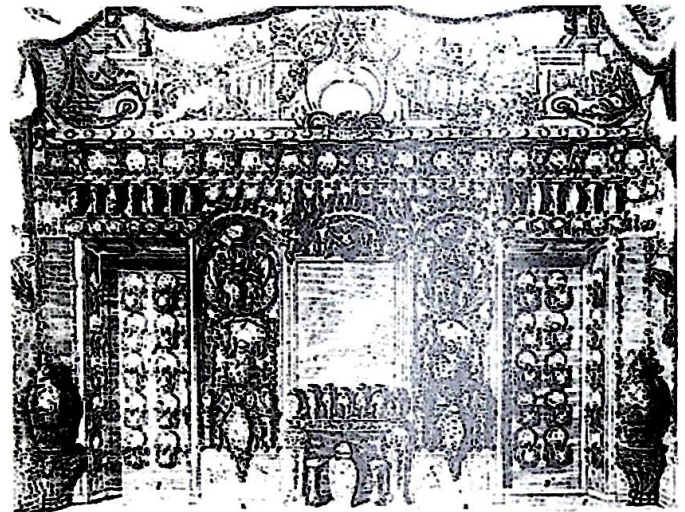


Figure 5. The porcelain room at Charlottenburg, in *Theatrum Europaei XVI und XVII*, by M. Merian, engraving after J.F. Eosander von Göthe, Frankfurt, 1717 and 1718.

of Imari decorated porcelain, was placed in mirrored cabinets and on the mantelpiece in 'the most beautiful and... incomparable' manner.

This room was to be outshone by the one at Pommersfelden, where Lothar Franz's Japanese and Chinese Imari and blue and white Kang Hsi porcelain were interspersed with blanc de chine figures in a manner which ravished the eye. The Prince-Bishop, who declared himself to be in competition with the 'gentleman from Vienna' (Prince Eugene of Savoy (1672–1736), who had created a porcelain room in the Lower Belvedere in around 1713) was entirely satisfied with this 'invention, which I produced entirely on my own'¹⁴.

But by far the most ambitious porcelain interior ever planned was by Augustus the Strong, Elector of Saxony and King of Poland (1670–1733). It is interesting to note that Augustus visited France as a young man in 1687, and must have been caught up in the enthusiasm for the visiting Siamese Ambassadors, who were to return to Siam in 1688. He may have seen Louis' display of gemstone vessels and even the Trianon de Porcelain before it was demolished. Perhaps it was here that Augustus was to acquire his enthusi-

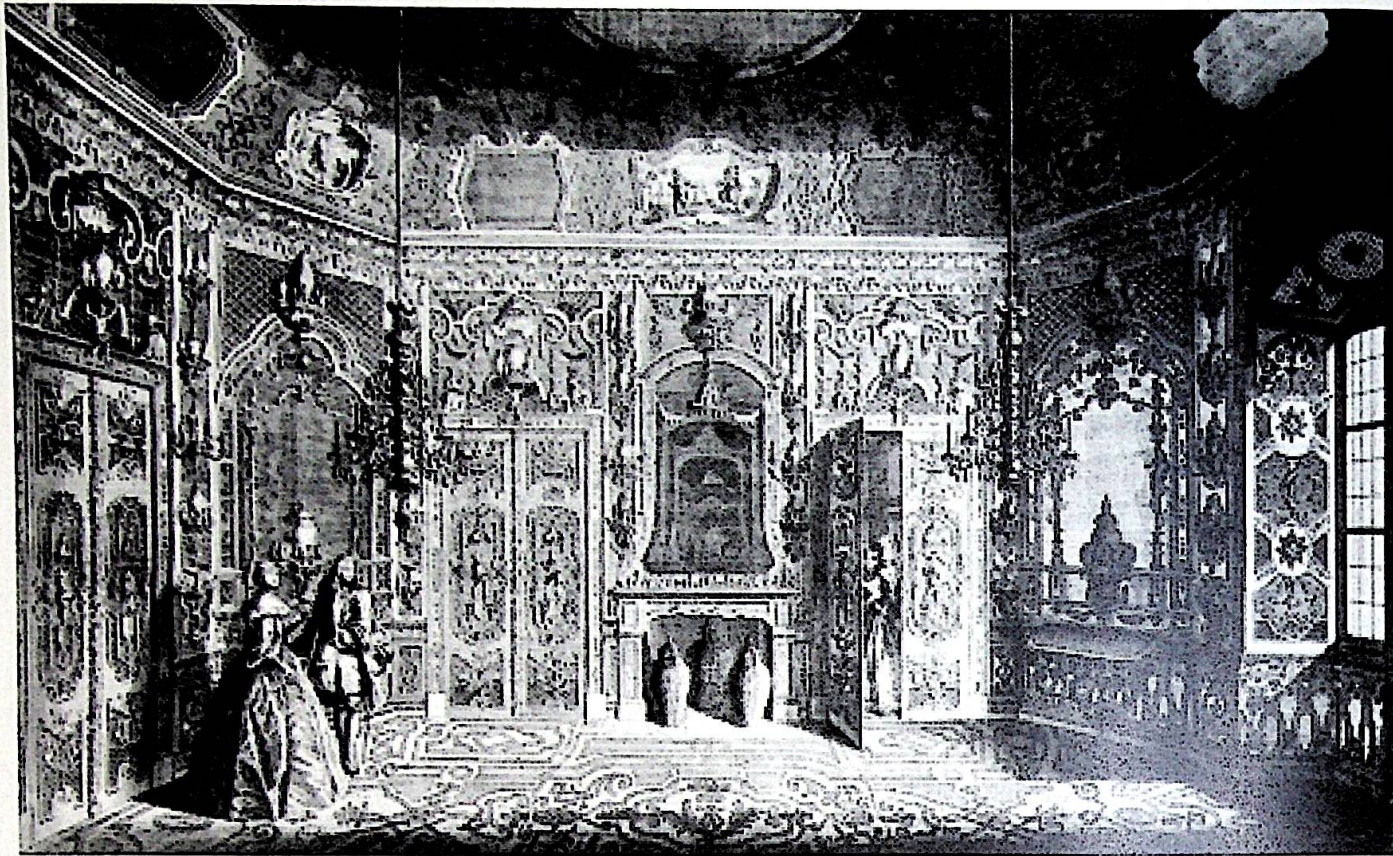


Figure 7. 'View of the Mirror and Porcelain Cabinet from the entrance side', in *Représentation au naturel des châteaux de Weissenstein au dessus de Pommersfelden, et celui de Geubach...*, engraving by Salomon Kleiner, Augsburg, 1728.

colour and type of porcelain. For example, a long gallery on the ground floor was devoted to Japanese porcelain with walls papered and mounted in green lacquered bands painted with golden dragons; while upstairs the second room in the corner was decorated with 'all kinds of porcelain in celadon and gold.'

On the main floor, a gallery 270 feet long was to contain 'all sorts of native and foreign birds and animals of pure porcelain furnished in their natural sizes and colours'. Two modellers at Meissen, J.G.Kirchner (b. 1706) and J.J.Kändler (1706–75), worked on this commission. In one year alone, 1732, the King ordered 214 different animals and 218 birds. Three hundred were delivered in 1735. The large size of the animals presented huge problems. A special porcelain body was developed and new ways of slowly drying the unfired porcelain were essayed. Despite this, most pieces had fire cracks and were not enamelled. It is interesting to note that many of the animals and birds created by Kirchner and Kändler were also in Augustus' menagerie, including a 'Lithuanian auroch' (bison), a lion, tiger, lynx and a rare pelican called a 'spoon-goose.' There was no elephant or rhino in the menagerie, though machines in the shape of both were used at court fetes as early as 1709 and 1714. Both these animals were made in porcelain at Meissen.

Creating porcelain for the Japanese Palace was a major undertaking for Meissen. In order to help, Augustus had

some of his Oriental collection delivered to the factory to be copied. Despite the huge quantity of Chinese porcelain in the collection, it was principally the Japanese porcelain that was duplicated. On 28 March, 1730, Augustus ordered 1,350 tea cups and saucers, dishes and vases with instructions for their design — '200 dishes in the Japanese fashion after model No. I or II; 50 Vogelbauer (bird cage vases) following Japanese drawings and paintings and in general after model No. II'. In total 35,799 pieces of Meissen were ordered and delivered to the Japanese Palace.

Augustus acquired his Oriental porcelain in a number of ways: from Count Fleming in 1717 and 23, through merchants or from legacy from one of his ministers, Raschke, in June 1722. Other pieces were bought by agents or diplomats in Holland¹⁸. Perhaps his most famous acquisition was of 151 pieces of Chinese and Japanese porcelain from Prussia in exchange for 780 dragoons and 600 mounted soldiers in 1717. Augustus sent a wish list of porcelain valued at 27,109.16 Thaler to Frederick William I of Prussia (1688–1740). It included 1,500 plates, 300 bowls, 12 blue and white sets, 40 flower plates from Charlottenburg, 1 pyramid, 300 tea bowls, and '6 or more vases from the cabinet a Oranienburg'¹⁹.

By 1721 there were 13,288 Oriental porcelain objects in the collection, growing to 21,099 by 1727. The Japanese Palace held about 57,000 pieces of Oriental and Meissen porcelain. The palace was never completed. Work continued after Augustus' death, but stopped in 1741. In 1759 some of the porcelain was placed in the cellars and the rest was removed in 1774 when the palace was transformed into a museum of antiquities, coins, and the royal library. The sole

surviving testament to Augustus the Strong's porcelain decoration was a tower room in the Dresden castle arranged in c.1726, which was photographed by Zimmermann in 1905. Unfortunately, the room did not survive World War II (fig 8).

The fashion for porcelain rooms was not to end with Augustus. By the 1730s most of the great principalities of Germany and Austria had porcelain rooms: Prussia, Saxony, Bavaria, as well as the princely families of Savoy and Wittelsbach. Other German princes were to follow. One of the most exquisite rooms built at this time in the new, lighter rococo style was for Prince Clemens August, Prince Bishop of Cologne, a great connoisseur of beauty, the exotic and all things French. In about 1730 he created a private and elegant retreat in the forest of Brühl, which he called Falkenlust. François Cuvillies, the designer of the Munich cabinet, was the prince's architect and it is clear that French style reigned supreme. Perhaps inspired by Pommersfelden or Favorite, and in the resurgence of interest in porcelain created by Augustus the Strong, the prince had three exotic rooms made: one of lacquer; one with life size Chinese figures cut from Chinese woodcuts; and one for his collection of Oriental and Meissen porcelain in his own apartment. Light and elegant, the porcelain was purely decorative rather than the central focus.

Emulating their larger and more fashionable neighbours, the smaller German principalities also created porcelain rooms. There were so many of these exotic rooms, with lacquer, mirrors gilding and porcelain that they cannot be discussed in detail here²⁰. There were porcelain rooms at Bamberg (c.1700), Ansbach (c.1730), Schloss Friedenstein in Gotha (before 1732), Arnstadt (c.1732-36), Altenburg (before 1734), Karlsruhe (before 1742), Bayreuth (c.1744), Saarbrücken (c.1747), and at Schloss Heidecksburg (early 18th century) to name but a few German rooms. A porcelain room appears in a dolls house created under the direction of Augusta-Dorothea of Schwarzburg-Arnstadt (1666-1751) between 1735-45. It had 45 miniature Chinese porcelains. And the Countess Palatine of Sulzbach and her ladies, perhaps unable to create a porcelain room, instead embroidered a blue and white panel showing porcelain on consoles, which until the war was housed at the Residenz in Munich. There were also porcelain rooms in Russia, at Montplaisir Palace near St. Petersburg (1713-16) and there is a single curious and early example of a ceiling lined with Chinese porcelain at the Santos Palace in Lisbon (1680s).

The final section of this article deals with another type of room where porcelain was an integral part of the architecture. Between c.1725-30 an extraordinary room was made at the Dubsky Palace in Brno, Moravia (now Czechoslovakia) for Count Markus Czobor of Szent-Mihály following his marriage to Maria Antonie of Liechtenstein. Here, the room was gradually entirely furnished in the Viennese porcelain of Du Paquier. Not only were vases, cups and covered jars specially made in a wide variety of shapes to be placed on the walls, but also candle-sconces and 1,450 porcelain plaques of 42 different shape and sized created to be inset into the panelling. Most of these pieces were decorated with chinoiserie ornament, prunus sprigs, chrysanthemums and peonies. Later additions to the room, including some vases and dishes, the fireplace (which was made of 15 large blocks of porce-

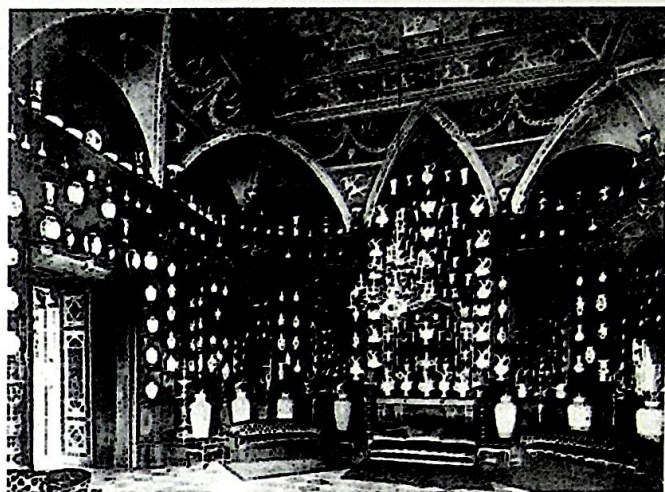


Figure 8. Porcelain room in the tower of the Dresden castle, photograph by Ernst Zimmermann in, 'Das Porzellanzimmer im Königlichen Schloss zu Dresden', *Dresdner Jahrbuch*, 1905, p.74.

lain) and the chandeliers, were decorated with Deutsche Blumen, known only after 1729 at Du Paquier. It is also interesting to note that some plaques of porcelain were used to ornament the furniture, presumably after 1760. It is therefore possible that the format of the room was altered in the 1760s. There is no original inventory of the porcelain. The Dubsky room is now in the Museum für Angewandte Kunst, Vienna.

The inspiration for the Dubsky room may have come from lacquer rooms, where it was quite usual to find pieces of lacquer cut into small sizes and mounted on the wall. The closest equivalent is the Sternberg Palace lacquer room created in c.1709 in Prague (fig 9)²¹. The Dubsky room is particularly interesting as it was entirely decorated with Viennese porcelain, rather than housing a collection of Oriental porcelain. Presumably, the proximity of Brno to Vienna played part in the use of Viennese porcelain for this room. Had the Count seen the Dutch Palace and wished to emulate it, but in a different manner?

Certainly, the use of Dutch Delft tiles was in common use in many 17th and 18th century great houses, and architects seemed to have no problem in discerning the difference between faience tiles and porcelain. Great friezes of tile were used by Mary I of England, and tiles appear in castles such as Nymphenburg and Falkenlust, not to mention those in Spanish and Portuguese palaces and castles.

Perhaps it was a combination of the desire to create an exotic environment, the long history of porcelain rooms, a parallel tradition of using tiles in architecture and the strong connection with Saxony, which prompted the creation of the famous porcelain room in the Palace of Portici in Naples, which was later moved to the Palace of Capodimonte. This room was created for Queen Maria Amalia (1724-1760), the grand-daughter of Augustus the Strong, between 1757 and 59. It cost 70,000 ducats and was the creation of Guiseppe Grieci (1700-70), and the enamellers Johan Sigismund Fischer and Luigi Restile. Each of the approximately 3,000 pieces fits together forming an enormous porcelain jigsaw puzzle. The room was described by Lady Blessington in her journal for 31 July, 1823, where she reveals the fate of the

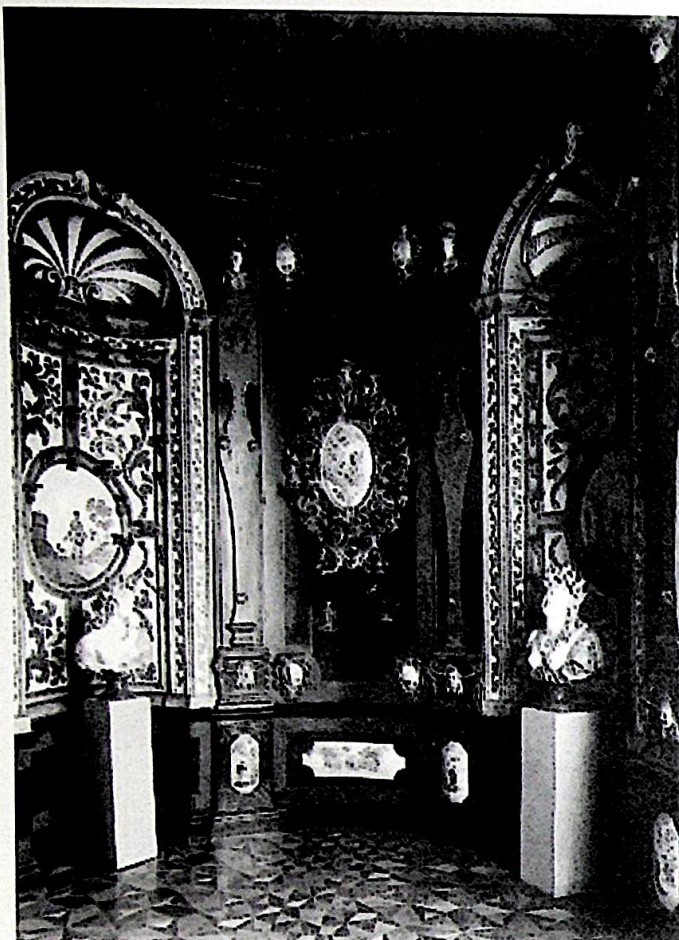


Figure 9. Lacquer room at the Sternberg Palace, Prague, c.1709 (now removed to the National Gallery, Prague). The gilt consoles may once have held porcelain.

porcelain floor:

'The panels have landscapes and groups finely painted, and are bordered with wreaths of flowers the size of Nature, of the richest and most varied dyes, in alto-rilievo; among which, birds of the gayest plumage, squirrels and monkeys, all of china, are mingled. The chandeliers, and frames of the mirrors are also of porcelain, and the effect is singularly beautiful. The floor was formerly covered in a similar style to the panels on the walls; but the King when obliged to fly from Naples, intended, as it is said, to remove the decorations from this chamber, and had only detached those of the floor, when he was compelled to depart'²². [This was Ferdinand I (1751–1825), who fled in 1799 for Palermo when the French invaded Naples.]

In 1759, Charles IV of Naples (1716–88) succeeded his half brother as King of Spain. So great was his attachment to his porcelain factory and his porcelain room that he shipped the moulds, the models, the workmen and their families and four tons of porcelain paste to Madrid, where Gricci created a second room, very similar but longer than the first at the Aranjuez Palace, between 1763 and 1765. This is the apotheosis of porcelain rooms, though a smaller, inferior room was created between 1770–80 at the Royal Palace in Madrid.

NOTES

1. Sir Harry Garner, 'Chinese Export Art in Schloss Ambras', *Oriental Ceramic Society. The Second Presentation of the Hills Gold Medal*, London, 1975, p.17.
2. T. Volker, *Porcelain and the Dutch East India Company*, Leiden, 1954, p.59.
3. L. Reidemeister, 'Die Porzellankabinette der Brandenburgisch-Preussischen Kunstsammlungen', *Jahrbuch der Preussischen Kunstsammlungen*, 54, 1933, p.262.
4. Peter Thornton, *Seventeenth-century Interior Decoration in England, France and Holland*, Yale University Press, New York and London, 1978, pp.250–51.
5. H. Belevitch-Stankevitich, *Le Gout Chinois en France au Temps de Louis XIV*, Paris, 1910, describes the impact of Nieuhoff's account, the Trianon de Porcelain and the visit of the Siamese Ambassadors in detail.
6. Celia Fiennes, *The Journals of Celia Fiennes*, edited by Christopher Morris, London, 1947, p.153.
7. Peter Thornton, *op. cit.*, p.78.
8. Quoted by Linda Rosenfeld Shulsky, 'Queen Mary's Collection of Porcelain and Delft and its Display at Kensington Palace', *American Ceramic Circle Journal*, Vol. VII, p.54.
9. L. Reidemeister, 'Die Porzellankabinette der Brandenburgisch-Preussischen Kunstsammlungen', *Jahrbuch der Preussischen Kunstsammlungen*, 55, 1934, p.45.
10. *Ibid.*, p.54.
11. Gabrielle Riemann-Wöhlbrandt, 'Der Porzellanbesitz der Langrafen Maria Amalia Zur Rolle der Damen beim Entstehen der langgräflichen Porzellansammlung', *Porzellan aus China und Japan. Die Porzellangalerie der Langgrafen von Hessen-Kassel*, Berlin, 1990 (exb. catalogue), pp.51–63.
12. L. Reidemeister, *op. cit.*, p.55. Unfortunately this inventory did not survive the War. (My thanks to Bernard Dragesco for this information).
13. I am indebted to Friederike Wappenschmidt for this quotation.
14. Werner Loibl, 'Ideen im Spiegel, Die Spiegelkabinette in den fränkischen Schönbörn-Schlössern', *Die Grafen von Schönbörn*, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, (exb. catalogue) 1989, pp.82–85.
15. See Gerald Heres, *Dresdener Kunstsammlungen im 18. Jahrhundert*, Leipzig, 1991, p.86.
16. Specifications for the decoration of each room of the Japanese Palace are preserved in the State Archives at Dresden (OHMA Plane Cap II nos. 3 & 15 and Konvolut no. 15). See also Jean-Louis Sponsel, *Kabinetstück der Meissner Porzellan-Manufaktur von Johann Joachim Kändler*, Leipzig, 1900, for a detailed description of the Japanese Palace, and for a list of Meissen animals and birds made for the long gallery.
17. Jean-Louis Sponsel, *op. cit.*, p.38.
18. Friedrich Reichel, *Early Japanese Porcelain*, London, 1980, p.119.
19. F. Fichtner, 'Dragonerporzellane', *Bericht der deutschen keramischen Gesellschaft*, 39, 1960, Vol. I, p.10.
20. Well illustrated articles on porcelain rooms may be found in F.H. Hofmann, *Das Porzellan*, Berlin, 1932, pp.471–86; Oliver Impey, 'Porcelain for Palaces', *Porcelain for Palaces, The Fashion for Japan in Europe 1650–1750*, Oriental Ceramic Society, (exb catalogue) 1990, pp.56–69; and by Friederike Wappenschmidt and Herbert Brautigam in *Porzellan aus China und Japan*, *op. cit.*, pp.65–86.
21. I am indebted to Clare Le Corbeiller for drawing this to my attention.
22. Edith Clay (ed), *Lady Blessington at Naples*, London, 1979, pp.43–44. My thanks to Clare Le Corbeiller for this reference.

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